

1 **MR. DICK THOMAS**

2
3 CHAIRMAN JAMES: Dick Thomas.

4 MR. THOMAS: Good afternoon. I'm Dick Thomas of
5 Naperville, about 30 miles west of Chicago. I am a member of the
6 Northern Illinois Conference of United Methodist Church. There
7 is a major ongoing effort to increase the number of casino boats
8 in Illinois. I am concerned about the drain on the economy as
9 epitomized in more than \$1 billion in annual gamblers' losses
10 here.

11 That will average out to about five and a half
12 million dollars during the two days that we have these meetings,
13 even as we sit here. That's just Illinois. Several situations
14 may offer some insight locally. A business acquaintance of mine
15 owns a restaurant in downtown Aurora, about two blocks from
16 dockside and has been there for 25 years. I asked him again last
17 week if he had any fallout business from the boats. He said he
18 had not, that this typical of other businesses nearby. People
19 drive to the casino parking ramp and leave afterward.

20 A close neighbor often going to Las Vegas, would go
21 to the boats two or three times a week, except the first week of
22 the month when government checks were due. He felt that that was
23 not the place for recipients to be. Residents of a retirement
24 home for \$15 are transported to a casino in Aurora, given \$10 in
25 casino start-up money, served lunch, then back at the end of the
26 seven hour day. In a span of 25 minutes to an hour and a half
27 from Naperville, we can reach at least five casino boats in four
28 different locations, a horse track, two dog tracks, off-track

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1 betting parlors and literally hundreds of lottery stations.
2 Gambling opportunities are rampant. Add the Internet.

3 I quote a Las Vegas casino owner, "We target
4 everybody. That's the business I'm in. Money is money, if it's
5 a Social Security check, a welfare check or a stock dividend.
6 Also it's our duty to extract as much money from the customer as
7 we can." Convoluted thinking has bundled entertainment, gambling
8 and casinos together with families and education and make it
9 appear to be a noble endeavor.

10 Proponents in Chicago at one time offered a
11 combination lake, dockside casino contiguous to some sort of
12 family resort complex, like a Disneyworld north meets Las Vegas
13 east on Lake Michigan extravaganza. Is there something wrong
14 with this picture?

15 Something for nothing simply does not exist.
16 Government at any level should not be sponsoring, promoting or be
17 affiliated with any gambling endeavor. Food money, medical
18 expense money, mortgage money, retirement money all are fair
19 game. Society is left to deal with and care for the mental,
20 physical, emotional and financial wrecks left in the wake. When
21 is enough, enough? Thank you.

22 CHAIRMAN JAMES: Thank you.

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